



2D BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 503D INFANTRY

THE

# ROCK REPORT

8 January 2009

Volume 1, Issue 1



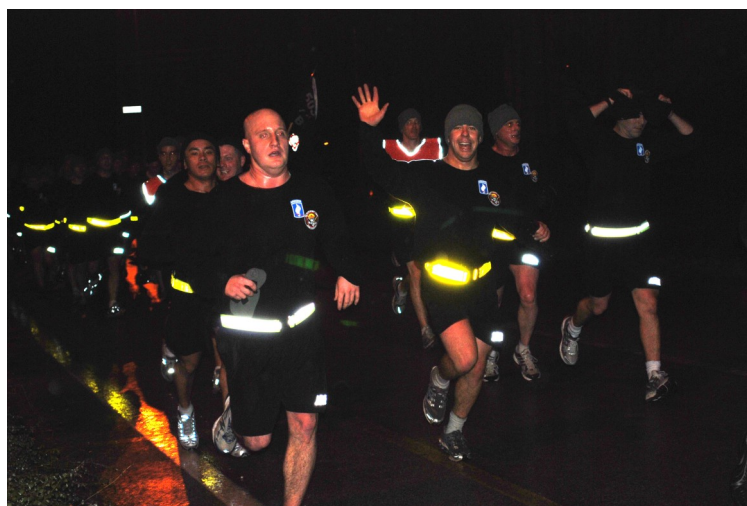
## The ROCK Seizes Key Ground in Aviano!



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST :

- > Rock Jump Week 2
- > HHC setting the example in WLC
- > Able Preps for EIB
- > Battle takes on new members
- > Chosen BAR news
- > Destined Update
- > Fusion's Culinary Artists

## The ROCK Rolls Through Vicenza in an Off Post Run!



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## Safety Finishes First in the ROCK Run!





## ROCK REPORT

Dear families, friends and Paratroopers of The ROCK - Since the battalion change of command almost 90 days ago there have been significant changes in 2-503d as well as many accomplishments. Most apparent was the personnel turnover. We said goodbye to almost 250 paratroopers and their families when they either ETSd after honorable service to our great nation or PCSd to other parts of the Army for continued service.

There are many new faces around the Battalion. Some of the new key leaders are: MAJ Jason Curl, the new Battalion XO; CHP (CPT) Robert Hensley our new chaplain and CPT Ryan Turner who will soon take command of Destined Company. We definitely miss those who departed, but are excited to welcome this next generation of ROCK paratroopers and their families to 2d Battalion.

The majority of paratroopers say that this RESET period has been exceptionally boring, and I could not agree more with them. Life in garrison just does not compare to the excitement and challenges associated with a deployment to Afghanistan. The thing that everyone needs to keep in mind is that our equipment sorely needs to be repaired or replaced after 15 months of combat operations. Over half of the battalion's paratroopers are rotating out, which means we have an equal number of new paratroopers and their families who need to be received, integrated, and prepared for our future deployment; which is a daunting task.

The battalion has embraced these challenges just like they always do, with a desire to accept nothing but complete success. Over 4,700 pieces of equipment have been repaired or replaced since the battalion re-deployed in August. This equipment can be something as simple as a bayonet or something as complex as a FMTV cargo truck.

Additionally, the battalion has trained our future junior leaders by sending hundreds of paratroopers to two different Warrior Leader Courses, one Joint Team Leader Course (we ran it in conjunction with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion), three Basic NCO Courses (IN, FA, and Transportation MOS'), a Company Commander / 1SG Course for all of our new company senior leaders, and even the Commander / Command Sergeant Major Course for me and CSM Womack. We have succeeded in sending troopers to Ranger School, the Sapper Leader Course, and Special Forces Assessment and Selection, too. The CSM and 1SGs held three monthly promotion boards to select our very best SPCs and SGTs for the challenges of more responsibility as SGTs or SSGs. Most importantly 88 paratroopers have decided to continue to serve our country and have enlisted for additional service here in Italy or at other locations Army-wide.

In the training realm we conducted three Level I Combatives Certifications, Jumpmaster Refresher, Basic Airborne Refresher, Radio-Telephone Operator (RTO) Academy, Bayonet First Responder training, a variety of marksmanship ranges and the Call for Fire Trainer. We also executed two different Jump Weeks. Unfortunately the Fall weather this year did not cooperate with us during the first one and only 140 jumpers successfully exited the aircraft. The second jump week was much better and we safely jumped over 400 jumpers and 180 paratroopers earned Italian jump wings.

Everything we focused on during the past 90 days is establishing a strong foundation upon which we can begin to conduct more complex, challenging training. In January our focus is on the Expert Infantryman's Badge, which is the final bit of individual skills training before we begin our intensive training cycle in February. I look forward to meeting the rest of our new paratroopers and their families as they continue to arrive through the Summer of 2009. We have many challenges ahead of us but there is no doubt that The ROCK will meet and exceed every one of them.

Sky Soldiers! The ROCK!

//ROCK 06//  
WILLIAM J. BUTLER  
Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry  
Commanding

//ROCK 07//  
LYLE WOMACK  
CSM, USA  
Command Sergeant Major



## ROCK REPORT

CPT Robert Wilson  
1SG Mitchell Rucker



### BLACKSHEEP NAVIGATE THROUGH THE LAND



Scouts and Mortar Men from HHC completed a

successful land navigation exercise on 05 November in Erbezzo. Forty Soldiers from the platoon journeyed two hours to the training area to practice their land navigation skills. The event was the culmination of a week of intensive land navigation training. During the week, Soldiers learned or reviewed

basic map reading, tactical route planning, and terrain association techniques. Soldiers then put these skills to practical use at the challenging Erbezzo land navigation course.

The locations rolling hills and wooded areas provided an adequate test for participants. Soldiers used terrain association and dead reckoning to locate three points during three two hour iterations. More skilled Soldiers completed multiple iterations

to maximize trainings. The few who struggled received remedial training prior to restarting the course.

Overall, the training proved very successful. The practical and garrison exercises reinforced rusty land navigation skills.

These skills are critical

for both EIB testing in January and upcoming deployments.

**The locations rolling hills and wooded areas provided an adequate test for participants**

### WILDCATS SET STANDARD AT WARRIOR LEADERS COURSE



During the most recent Warriors Leaders Course at the 7<sup>th</sup> Army NCO Academy in Grafenwoehr Germany, members of the ROCK Scout platoon known as the Wildcats set a new standard for the Brigade by winning several individual awards.

**SPC Robert Blankinship** – Commandants List

**SGT Oliver King** – Commandants List

**SGT Ryan Schwarz** – Commandants List

**SPC Anthony Stamper** – APFT Warrior (341 Extended Scale APFT Score)

WLC is a four week course designed for current and future team leaders. Instructors utilize the Warrior Ethos and the Army's 40 Warrior Tasks and 11 Battle Drills to prepare Specialists and Sergeants for the mantle of leadership. The example set by these BlackSheep is in the finest "Follow Me" examples set by team leaders in the ROCK.

### Awards And Notes

On 16 December, the Blacksheep saluted **SFC Phillip A. Moore** for his 21 years of service to the nation. Mr. Phillip Moore's future residence will be in the Reno Nevada area.





# ROCK REPORT

## CPT Dave Nelson 1SG Christopher Schofield



### ABLE SOLDIER NEWS

Able Company also said good-bye to many Soldiers and Non Commissioned officers who have served with us. All of them served honorably during our last deployment and many of them served with Able Company during two or three deployment. Whether they served on one deployment or

three, their contributions, service, and expertise will be missed. As they PCS or ETS we wish them well in their future endeavors and assignments.



**It's been a very busy but very rewarding and successful four months.**

### ABLE TRAINING

In the last four months, Able Company has accomplished an enormous amount of work by resetting hundreds of pieces of equipment from deployment, getting our administrative systems up and running, beginning to regain airborne proficiency, and training on individual skills. The highlights of the past few months were two jump weeks. While

the first week was cut down significantly due to weather, the second jump week was much more successful and saw many of our Paratroopers earn their Italian Jump Wings by having an Italian Jump Master on their aircraft. Another memorable experience was our rainy and cold day at Cao Malnisio range. Although the weather was once again a

challenge, we still made the most of the training opportunity and were able to complete rifle qualification for Expert Infantryman's Badge testing and conduct familiarization fire on our pistols, machine guns, and M203 grenade launchers. It's been a very busy but very rewarding and successful four months.

### WORDS FROM ABLE 6

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from Able Company! Since our last newsletter we've been busy but we've also had some great opportunities for family time and fun. Christmas block leave is now upon us and we have the opportunity for 19

straight days of spending quality time with family and friends to reconnect and strengthen family bonds that are so important to the success of our Paratroopers and our Company.

Once Again, thank you for all you do to support Able Company and your Paratroopers. Please have a safe and happy Holiday Season with your family and loved ones.





## ROCK REPORT

CPT Joshua VanEtten  
1SG James Hill



### Battle Company Welcomes New Soldiers

**...answering a higher calling: becoming an awesome soldier...**

**SGT Christopher Shupert** was born in Fort Scott, Kansas in the 80s.

In High School, SGT Shupert was not only a star athlete playing varsity basketball, football (nominated for the High School Heisman), and baseball but also a stellar academic student serving as the yearbook editor, class president and NHS president graduating with a 4.0.

SGT Shupert then attended Mid-America University on a baseball scholarship before answering a higher calling: becoming an awesome soldier.

He attended basic at Fort Benning, GA and Airborne

School. Although initially enrolled in R.I.P., SGT Shupert realized that being a Airborne Paratrooper was far superior than being in Ranger Battalion. S

GT Shupert was unfortunate enough to have served in the 82nd for 4 years, but the Big Army and Commander in Chief George W. Bush were wise enough to send SGT Shupert to 'The Rock' in October of 2008.

SGT Shupert currently serves as the 3rd Squad Leader for the 'Spartans' 2nd Platoon, Battle Company. SGT Shupert enjoys fishing, golfing and bicycle riding.

**SPC Steven David Goodloe** is from Cleburne, TX where he graduated from Cleburne HS.

Steven went on to complete EMT Basic, CLS/RFR and Airborne courses.

His previous units include PLDC NCOA, C 3/61 CAV, 2BCT, 2ID and A 1/9 INF, 2BCT, 2ID with a deployment from Oct2006-Dec2007 in support of OIF V.

SPC Goodloe's noteworthy accomplishments include the Expert Infantry Badge.

SPC Goodloe will celebrate his three year anniversary to his wife, Bliss who is six months pregnant.

### Soldiers Undergo Basic Airborne Refresher To Prep For Jump

On 25NOV2008, Battle CO conducted the Basic Airborne Refresher (BAR) at the North 40. Battle CO soldiers along with their fellow paratroopers participated in BAR in preparation for future airborne operations. Since being deployed, most of The Rock paratroopers have

not jumped in a period of time. BAR was much needed to help new soldiers train to The Rock standard and refresh senior Rock paratroopers on the fundamentals of airborne missions.





## ROCK REPORT

CPT Devin George  
1SG Shane Sport



### Chosen Few Soldier news

November and December have been busy months for the soldiers of Chosen Company 2/503 IN (ABN).

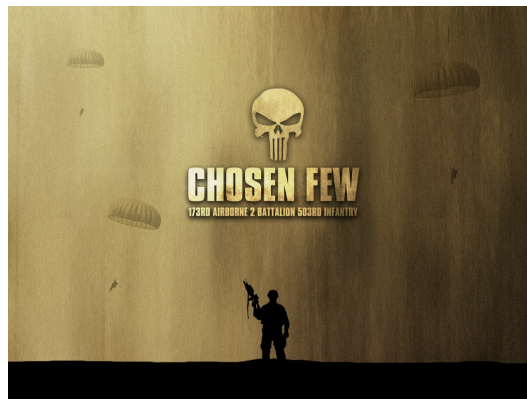
Paratroopers went up to Grafenwoehr, Germany for Warrior Leaders Course and did an outstanding job. CPL Gutterson and SGT Rux from 1<sup>st</sup> platoon

and SGT Hayes from 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon all graduated on the commandants list.

In addition, SGT Gobble, SPC Zeamer, SPC Vega, SPC Locker, and CPL Gutterson have all reenlisted.

The Company also welcomed 1LT John Tato from Destined Company. He

took over as the platoon leader for 1<sup>st</sup> platoon.



**Not only did the unit conduct multiple successful jumps, the majority of Chosen Company received their Italian Jump Wings.**

### Chosen Training

These past few months have all been full of training events for Chosen paratroopers. The company went up to conduct a small arms range at Cao Malnisio. Despite rain

and low temperatures most soldiers shot expert, the highest qualification standard. December also brought another jump week. In the first week of December, "ROCK" soldiers and Chosen Company paratroopers drove

up to Aviano Air Base for airborne operations. Not only did the unit conduct multiple successful jumps, the majority of Chosen Company received their Italian Jump Wings.

### On the Horizon

If Italy doesn't sink or float away, the soldiers expect training to kick in as soon as they return from block leave. Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB), WLC, and a Grafenwoehr training rotation are all scheduled events for the spring of

2009. With their motivation high the paratroopers of Chosen Company go into block Christmas leave after completing a successful reset period. Their equipment was repaired and basic soldier tasks were reinforced and retrained. As the New Year

arrives the soldiers will hit the ground in a full sprint with collective training and preparation for upcoming missions.

2ND BATTALION (AIRBORNE) 503D INFANTRY



## ROCK REPORT

CPT Christopher Rowe  
ISG Stephen Zaleski



### DESTINED UPDATE

It has been a busy several months for Destined Company. Since returning from Afghanistan the company has welcomed many new Paratroopers and said goodbye to many veterans. All of the Destined for Victory Soldiers who have remained with the Rock and Destined Company have been busy at work – attending schools like WLC, BNCOC, and combatives; shooting and qualifying with their M4 carbines at the MIR; doing what Paratroopers like best – jumping out of airplanes; and doing what Paratroopers like least – cleaning and fixing lots and lots of equipment. The company is currently on winter Exodus block leave with Paratroopers enjoying themselves all over the world.

### ON THE HORIZON

**...the company  
will be in high  
gear throughout  
the rest of the  
year...**

Upon everyone's return at the beginning of January, the Company will be training and testing for the coveted Expert Infantryman's Badge. We will also say goodbye to CPT Rowe as he changes command with CPT Ryan Turner. CPT Rowe won't be too far away, however, as he is taking command of one of our sister companies, Chosen / 2-503. CPT Turner is coming to us from Fort Benning where he was a student at the MCCC and a company XO in 3<sup>rd</sup> Ranger Battalion. EIB the company will be in high gear throughout the rest of the year as it trains at a multitude of ranges and training areas across Europe in preparation for future missions. Destined for Victory!

Following changes of command and

## Fusion Company



Photo by Christen Pike

**Fusion Company**, 2<sup>nd</sup> BN (ABN), 503<sup>rd</sup> IN.  
Commanded by CPT John A. Jimenez, looking sharp and in step as they "Pass in Review" on 30 September 2008 during The Rock Change of Command where LTC William Butler assumed command of The Rock from LTC William Ostlund on Hoekstra Field Caserma Ederle, Vicenza, Italy.

**Maintenance Platoon** has been very busy this past month with many moving pieces. Their primary focus has been the focus of RESET. RESET is the process of ensuring all equipment from the Battalion is inspected and brought up to a fully mission capable status. This ranges from HMMWVs to the individual soldier's gear. They are taking part of a new pilot program for the Army to see if it's worth it. Soldiers have done an amazing job of working out the clutches and ensuring everything is done to standard.

Many soldiers have been departing maintenance platoon. We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the following individuals; SFC Nims, SGT Underwood, SGT Rosario, SGT Bushart, SGT Quezada, SGT Casillas, SGT Edwards, SGT Escobar, SPC Benov, SPC Cox, SPC Lockhart, SPC Bruno, SPC Mecum, SPC Wilson, SPC Hernandez, and SPC Nava. Fusion Company would like to wish you the very best in your future endeavors. At this time we would like to welcome the following soldiers and their families into Fusion Company; SGT Croker, PFC Walker, PFC Roacho, PFC Owens, PFC Macik, PFC Arroyo, PV2 Torres, PV2 Irizarry and our new PL 1LT Robert Murphy. Again welcome to Fusion Company.

# F/2-503

### Message from the Commander:

It has been several months since our return from the Mountains of eastern Afghanistan and we are now re-establishing ourselves in beautiful Italy. Fusion Company is almost complete re-setting our equipment and ourselves. During this time we will also be saying good-bye to many in the Fusion family and greeting new family members. I have been thoroughly impressed by the professionalism and the can-do-attitude since I assumed command of this proud and excellent organization. The daily actions of all Fusion's soldiers made them a vital player in The Rock's unrivaled success in the Kunar and Nuristan Provinces of Afghanistan. Now we are actively capturing the lessons learned and the areas of concentration we need to focus on as we train up for another deployment. Hats off to all of these men and women. We wish you the best as you move on to your next assignment or on to civilian life. There is no doubt the "new guys" have big shoes to fill, but I'm confident that they will be up to the challenge.

FUSION 6

### Who are these masters of mashed potatoes? These wizards of waffles? These supermen of spuds?

These are the heroes to the heroes of the "rock". These are the soldiers who give a morale booster to the eleven bang bangs, the Fisters, Tankers, MPs, Rangers, Paratroopers, Chain of Command and every soldier and civilian or family member that ever came into a Mobile Kitchen Trailer, Containerized Kitchen or Dining Facility. Whether deployed abroad or in the Vicenza area these are the soldiers that make it happen. The conditions are not the best. After receiving fire, being mortared, being tasked out to support companies, take a PT test, going to a range, and doing another PDHRA, these soldiers still go into the dining facility (shorthanded quite often) and make it happen. At 0500 or 1900 on weekends, holidays, and training holidays we make it happen. We do not complain or gripe. We do our job and we love it. Many times have our guys come into a wooden shack of a D-FAC and gotten chicken wraps or wings with a homemade sauce, maybe an omelet after returning fire next to your cook who was just on post with you. These soldiers are innovators, creators and thinkers of recipes, a dash here a sprinkle there Violal, A meal that was better then momma's (even though you may not tell her) The Culinary Artist's of The "ROCK" always asked for, always loved, always there to make you fat and fail your PT test.

During our first holiday event back in the Vicenza community, (Thanksgiving Meal) the "Super Bowl" of the culinary artist, who are sometimes referred to as "cooks" or "spoons" behind our backs, the headcount was 1300 military and civilian personnel who shared in the joy, companionship, hospitality, and bringing together in this celebration of food, friends and family.



# ROCK REPORT

## FUSION



1: 31 OCT 08  
PAYDAY ACTIVITIES In-ranks Inspection

2: CPT Jimenez inspects  
SPC Lopez as SSG Clark  
waits to move down the line

3: SPC Padiang has SPC  
Sulick in a choke hold  
during Combatives training

4: CPT Jimenez looks over  
SPC Payton as SFC Nims  
makes some adjustments  
on a fellow Maintenance  
Platoon member

5: 1SG Duenas and CPT  
Jimenez pose for a CMD  
Photo at the Rock Battalion  
Headquarters

6: Fusion Combatives  
Academy Paired

7: Learning the motions

8: Fusion Combatives  
Academy Class 09-001



## Special Announcements

### SSG Valai Becomes a US Citizen

Name: SSG Petero Valai

Unit: Fusion Co, 2/503 IN

MOS: 92A3P  
(Automated Logistics Specialist)



Place of Birth:  
Pago Pago, American Samoa (US Territory) (US National)

"The decision to become a US citizen is one of the most important decisions in my personal life. It's allowed me to participate and vote in the national election for the President of the United States of America. Also there are open opportunities that will help me for further advance my military career and my future. Now I am so proud to be an American."

Date of Ceremony: 21 October 2008

### SPC Nava Becomes a US Citizen

Name: SPC Noe Nava

Unit: Fusion Co, 2/503 IN  
MOS: 63B10  
(Mechanic)



Place of Birth:

"My decision to become a US citizen was the most important thing to me to do in my life. It will allow me to pursue my dreams of going to college and to vote for the President. Also so I can live in the states so I can be with my daughter and take care of her and so I can live my life there and pursue my dream in becoming one of the best custom air brush paint artists in the states and get my degree in art history at Utah State University. Now I am proud to become a US citizen."

Date of Ceremony: 17 November 2008